
Torch

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Cedarville College

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TORCH

A MAGAZINE MINISTRY OF CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

Prayer – A Practical Primer

Cedarville College Library

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FEATURE ARTICLES:

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**Reese R.
Kauffman**

Mr. Kauffman is president of Kauffman Products in Carmel, Indiana. His in-depth study of the subject of prayer has afforded him numerous opportunities to speak on the subject. He is a President's Associate, and he and his wife live in Carmel. Their daughter Michelle is a sophomore at Cedarville College.

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**Reese R.
Kauffman**

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**Ronald J.
Coriell**

Mr. Coriell is Director of Public Relations at Cedarville College as well as managing editor of the TORCH. He and his wife Rebekah have authored 24 children's books on character building. They are also active in giving seminars and talks on character building concepts. The Coriells have three girls and live in nearby Jamestown, Ohio.

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Warren**

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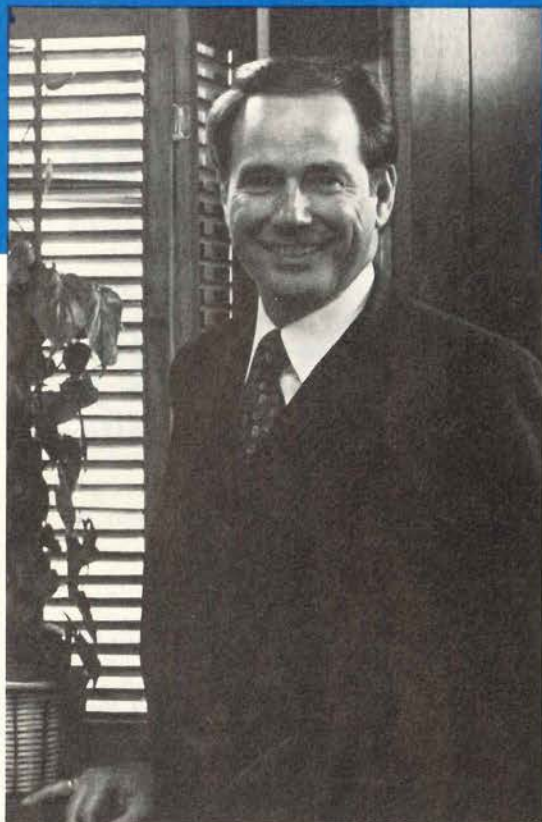
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Praying And Our Prosperity

by Dr. Paul Dixon, President

Thank you for praying! Cedarville College is unusually blessed of God. Our trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students marvel at all He is doing in our behalf. There is not an area of the college that does not enjoy unusual prosperity.

Our enrollment in the last three years has grown by nearly 500 students – almost 40%. We have been able to add numerous programs and staff them with capable, committed Christians.

The impact of our students through Christian service opportunities and gospel teams is obvious locally, nationally, and worldwide. It is thrilling to note that our student teams ministered in 350 churches last year; 100 students were involved on many mission fields around the world.

The alumni of Cedarville College are involved in shaping churches, the Christian school movement, the business community, and other segments of society.

We have been able to construct facilities, pay salaries, expand programs, and balance budgets. In part, this has been possible because of God's people who are sold on Christian education and have chosen to sacrificially give of their resources to make it possible.

Although all cannot give of their money, most of our friends do faithfully pray for us. Prayer is the only possible explanation for the miracle of Cedarville College. The well-being of this college over these many

years is to the glory of God and due to His grace. Dr. Jeremiah and I both testify to this; thus, we have a deep appreciation for all who faithfully pray for us.

Yet, how much more we all need to learn in our Lord's school of prayer. Martin Luther said, "There are three things which go into the making of a successful preacher: supplication, meditation, and tribulation." The same would be true for every Christian.

We need to pray – yet we pray so little. We know so little about it. But who will be our teacher? The disciples went to their Master, and so must we.

It seems, as we study the gospels, that Jesus was always praying. Whatever His schedule or whomever His critics, He found the place and the time for communion with His Father. At times Christ prayed alone – but often He invited others to join Him.

Like us, Jesus grew weary in body and faced the emotional strains that go with it. People problems were His, as they are ours. He lived, as we do, in the midst of a sinfully depraved sea of humanity. The major difference is that we live as sinners and He was sinless. Still Christ Jesus prayed. Apparently our Lord did not simply *find* time to pray; he *made* time to pray!

S. D. Gordon said, "The Lord Jesus is still praying. Thirty years of living; thirty years of service; one tremendous act of dying; 1900 years of prayer. What an emphasis and example of prayer."



Praying As A Priority

by Reese R. Kauffman

Our country is in a spiritual crisis, our churches face mounting opposition, and Satan appears to be getting the upper hand. Why is this happening? I believe it is because Christians are not praying.

It has been said that the average Christian in America spends only four minutes a day in prayer. It was found that pastors spend an average of only seven minutes per day conversing with God.

In recent years, God has given me the privilege of speaking around the country on the subject of prayer. It is my favorite topic, because it is the one thing that has changed my life completely since I gave it totally over to God nine years ago.

THE DIFFICULTY OF PRAYER

Anyone who tells you that prayer is easy evidences the fact that he does not spend much time in prayer. A Christian who is serious about praying becomes an instant candidate for Satan's hit list. He opposes what hurts his program.

Prayer is also difficult because it cannot be done just out of habit. Nominal Christians can attend church faithfully, read their Bibles, tithe, and even be a witness, and still remain nominal. This is because they have developed all the acceptable habits. But, there is one thing a believer will not do just out of habit — spend time alone with God in prayer. This is because only one of two things can happen if one prays with any seriousness: either his life gets right with God and remains pure, or he quits praying. There is no in-between.

It is interesting to me that the terminology of Scripture alludes to the difficulty of praying. God uses words such as "wrestling," "striving," "laboring," and "agonizing." Friends, it is a battle to pray!

THE PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

Foremost, a person must be a Christian prior to any attempt at prayer. It has been said that the first prayer God wants to hear is the "sinner's prayer." This

involves confessing sins to God and by faith receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Secondly, a Christian must be in proper fellowship with the Lord in order to expect his prayers to be answered. This means there is no known sin harbored in the heart. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

I have found that the most important prayer time of my day is my first waking moment. This is before my mind gets cluttered with the events of the day. First, I examine my heart to see if it is free of sin. Next, I yield myself to the Lord for the day, giving Him control of my thoughts, my eyes, my tongue, my hands, and my feet. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight...(Psalm 19:14).

WHY PRAY?

Frankly speaking, there is only one word for prayerlessness — sin! God has commanded that we pray and He expects us to obey (Matthew 26:41; Philippians 4:6; James 4:2). That is why we must pray.

If the President of the United States called me on the phone and invited me to dinner at the White House, believe me, there is nothing on my busy schedule that I could not cancel in order to make that dinner date. Why? Because, the President asked me to come. Yet, has not the King of Kings asked us — yes, ordered us — to pray? Do we arrange our schedule to comply with His request?

In addition, Christians should make supplication to God because there is power in prayer (Matthew 7:7; John 14:13; John 15:7; Luke 10:2). It is God's way to accomplish His plan and purpose for our lives. We pray, and He answers. It's simple and powerful.

Lastly, believers should pray because it is a valuable exercise in itself, aside from the response of God. What happens to Reese Kauffman when he prays? I am conscious of God and His presence because I am talking to Him. Your day and my day will always be better if we are constantly aware of His presence. Would you be

afraid of anything if you sensed Christ were by your side? Of course not. Then as we pray often, we are constantly recognizing the presence of God, and thus we need not fear any crisis.

WHEN TO PRAY

I Thessalonians 5:17 states, "Pray without ceasing." Is this possible? Three other scriptures echo the same admonition: Philippians 4:6; Luke 18:1; and Colossians 4:2. Let me share with you twelve suggested times throughout a given day to pray to God.

1. Early morning. Begin your day with God and it will help you to go with God all day (Psalm 63:1).
2. Pray anytime that you feel the peace of God disturbed in your life. Then, it is time to pray (Colossians 3:15).
3. Pray when you face temptation (Matthew 26:41).
4. Pray everytime you need wisdom or courage (James 1:5).
5. Pray when you witness (Colossians 4:2-6).
6. As fathers drive home after work, be in prayer (Colossians 3:8,12-15). You are going home to be the spiritual leader in that household. The first ten minutes will set the tone for the entire evening.
7. Pray everytime you eat (Ephesians 5:20).
8. Pray each time the Holy Spirit seems to be prompting you to pray.
9. When you promise to pray for someone, do it. This is promising God that you will pray for that person (Ecclesiastes 5:4).
10. Pray in preparation for church services (Ephesians 5:16).
11. Pray when you feel grateful (Ephesians 5:20).
12. Pray when you want to do the most you can for someone (Colossians 1:3, 9-11).

IS IT EVER WRONG TO PRAY?

Do not be shocked. There are indeed times when it is inappropriate to pray because God will not answer. When? Let me suggest four times.

1. When you want God's blessing on something that clearly violates Scripture.
2. When you harbor unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18).
3. When there are conflicts between husband and wife (I Peter 3:7).
4. When you are not using your resources and your talents for God.

HOW DO WE PRAY?

One of the most precious experiences that I have had recently was leading a nineteen-year-old fellow to the Lord in my office. I asked him to pray aloud to God just as if He were sitting in a chair right across from him. As he started to pray, I peeked, and what I heard and witnessed really touched my heart. He was praying with his head half bowed, his eyes wide open, and looking at that empty chair. You would have thought Jesus was really there in bodily form! His words were

those of a person simply talking to a new found friend — no flashy phrases, no \$600 sentences.

There is no need for Christians to impress God with their speech. Simply tell Him what is on your heart. He will understand, and He will respond.

In Hebrews 4:16 you are invited to come to God boldly. No problem is too small for God.

When you hurt badly, pray, knowing that He understands your innermost feelings. He has already experienced your hurt (Hebrews 4:15).

Pray in the Spirit. This can be done only if we are filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). If we are controlled by the Spirit, we will pray in the will of God; and if we pray in God's will, we are assured our prayers will be answered (I John 5:14,15).

Do not use vain repetitions (Matthew 6:7,8). These are the rehearsing of words from the mind and not the heart. Christians do this today when they pray in generalities. I believe in "model and serial number praying" — that is, praying specifically. When He answers such a supplication, we *know* He has answered! We get the encouragement and God gets the glory.

Romans 12:12 reads, "...continuing instant (diligently) in prayer." How do you feel when you miss a prayer commitment, compared to missing a mortgage or insurance payment?

Pray with forgiveness in mind for any who have hurt or offended you (Mark 11:25). Bitterness renders prayer useless.

Pray and supplicate (Philippians 4:6). These terms do not mean the same thing. Supplicate in Hebrew means to "cry for mercy," and in the Greek, "ask a favor in special intensity."

Include thanksgiving as you pray (Philippians 4:6). This answers the question, "What can I give to God Who has been so gracious to me?"

Lastly, pray for your own spiritual weaknesses. This is one of the most important elements in the "how to's of prayer." This might include praying for a greater burden for the lost, a greater hunger for the Word, a greater hatred of sin, or a greater longing for godliness. We have absolute assurance of an answer to this type of prayer (I John 5:14,15).

IN CONCLUSION

What our country needs is a revival. But, this will not come as more souls are saved. It will not happen just because we elect a few Christian politicians. I am convinced that the answer to the ever increasing crisis in our nation will only come as Christians get serious about prayer. The Bible is very clear about this:

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14).

The question must be asked, "Will you begin to pray — really pray?"

explained to me that making a list was the most efficient way to prepare her food menu.

First of all, Linda had detailed the days and the meals to be served, who would be at each meal, and what food was to be prepared. Next to this, she had written her grocery store shopping list. This list was in the order of the way she would pass through the store aisles so that she would not have to waste time backtracking. I was really impressed! She had it all so organized. A short time later, after a quick trip to the grocery, we were on our way to the river.

About a day later, the thought occurred to me, **"My wife is better organized going to the grocery than I am going to the throne of God!"** What a reproof this was to me.

I believe every part of a Christian's life should be organized. In our Bible reading, we do no flip open our Bibles – we have a plan. In our giving, we do not just reach into our pockets – we have a plan. However, in most Christians' lives, it seems that when it comes to prayer, it is "hit or miss" and mostly miss.

God convicted me so much about my haphazard praying that I decided to come up with a system that would help me to remember to pray, to regulate my prayers, and to reinforce my prayers.

A Practical Plan for Prayer

When we really take time to think through and list the items for which we should be praying, we soon realize it is impossible to cover them every day. Yet, the Scripture teaches us "...that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). I would like to suggest a prayer plan that will help you remember and discipline yourself to pray for a multitude of items on a regular basis.

Another important reason for establishing a prayer plan is to keep a record of answered prayer. When we begin to record answers to prayer, it is amazing to see how God is blessing us. I believe Satan does everything in his power to cause us to fail to recognize God's faithfulness to our prayers. Tremendous encouragement can be received when we go back over the past several months and review these specific answers.

Materials:

- 3-ring notebook
- Fine-lined paper
- Dividers
- Plain 3" x 5" cards

Requests:

Spend a half hour listing all the prayer requests that you can think of. Then categorize them. Your categories might include some of the following:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Praise | Lost Friends |
| Spiritual Needs | Missionaries |
| Family | Church |
| Personal Ministry | Business |
| Christian Friends | Miscellaneous |

Notebook:

For inclusion in your notebook, prepare a divider and two sheets of paper for each of the categories that you select. On the first sheet of paper, make four columns as

shown below and fill in the information. In the code column, an abbreviation is placed to indicate how often you will pray for that item. **D** might be used for something you wish to pray for **daily**. **SU** might be selected to indicate a request you pray for only on **Sunday**.

Date Entered	Date Answered	Code	Request
2/3/82	2/15/82	D	Uncle Tom-illness

On the second sheet make two columns.

Date Answered	Record of Answered Prayer
2/15/82	successful surgery

3" x 5" cards:

One card is for requests to be prayed for daily. Another card, called a scratch card, contains short-term and urgent requests that are received on a day-to-day basis. The rest of the cards (one for each day of the week) will have the requests you have coded for that particular day. For example:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Praise	Dad's report Sally's grand- mother surgery Dick & Sue- sale of house	Taxes Salvation- Xerex Joseph Barbara

How It Works

Each day you carry with you three cards: the every-day prayer card, the scratch card, and the day-of-the-week card. You can use them in your devotions, in your car on the way to work, while you do the dishes, or at any moment you have spare time.

I have given to God all my waiting time. When I visit a business and have to wait in the lobby, I pray, using my cards instead of reading a magazine. Now, it has become such a habit with me that I automatically begin to pray if I am held up in traffic or put on hold while on the telephone. It is amazing how God controls my waiting time so that I can pray!

As God answers your prayers specifically, record these answers on your answer sheet in the category of that prayer request. Then, remove the request from your prayer card.

Purpose not to let a day slip by without praying over your cards at least once. I promise you that with this kind of faithful prayer, "...without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17), God is going to pour out answers in a way that you never thought possible.

Have you had any prayers answered lately? Most of us have. But, let us be honest. There are times when heaven seems to be a concrete fortress and our prayers appear to have the penetrating power of ping pong balls.

Why? Is this just the way it is? Is this part of normal Christian living? Is there a secret to "praying with power"? If so, does our God reveal it only to "spiritual giants"? A voice out of the past would shout a resounding "No!" and further investigation would confirm that George Mueller believed all Christians can pray with power.

History reveals that George Mueller was perhaps one of God's greatest prayer warriors. From 1805-1898, *simply by prayer and faith*, without asking any other individual for financial assistance, he was enabled by God to:

- Erect five large orphan houses in Bristol, England.
- Shelter, feed, and clothe 10,000 orphans, many of whom received Jesus Christ as Savior.
- Circulate 109 million books and leaflets, 279,000 Bibles, and 1.4 million Testaments.
- Establish or assist 117 schools in 10 different countries in which 122,000 young people were educated.
- Travel 200,000 miles by sea and land, preach in 42 countries in five continents after he was 70 years old.
- Pray in \$6,905,850.
- Give away \$407,450 sent for his personal use.
- Leave a personal estate valued at \$800.

Are you amazed? Of course! Did Mueller pray with power? Undoubtedly! But, can you and I pray like Mueller and get results?

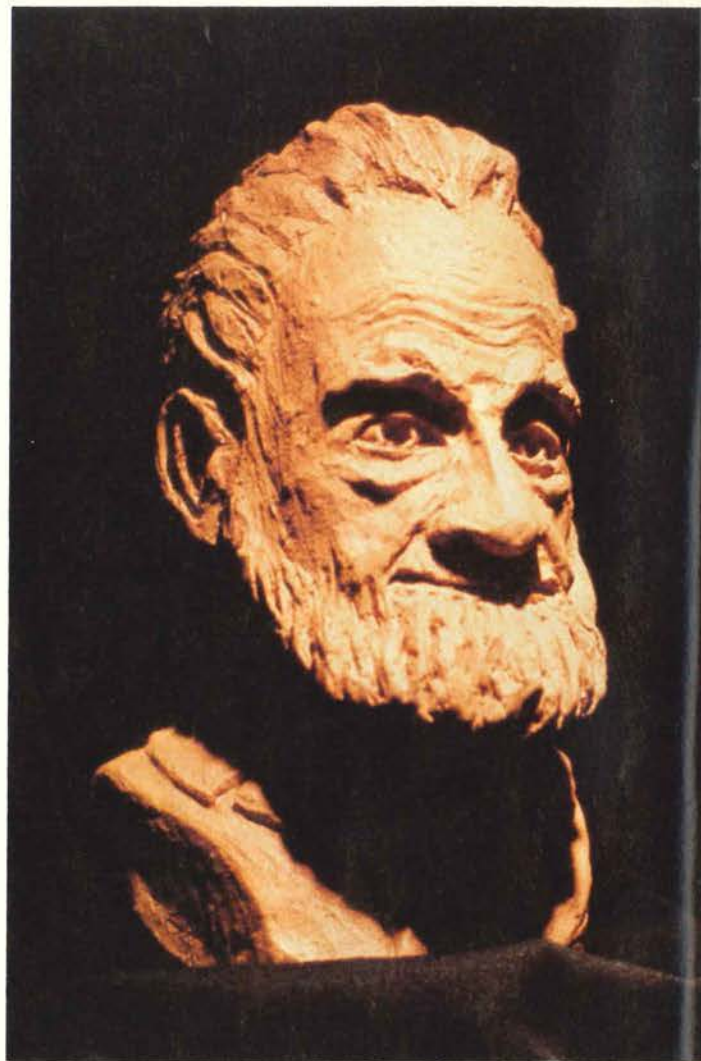
He once said, "...I pray to the Lord, and expect an answer to my requests; and may not you do the same, dear believing reader? Oh! I beseech you, do not think me an extraordinary believer, having privileges above other of God's dear children, which they cannot have; nor look on my way of acting as something that would not do for other believers."

George Mueller believed that power in prayer is available to *all* Christians and that God delights to grant His children's petitions when they are offered to Him according to a few simple rules. His life exemplified obedience to those rules.

HE PRAYED IN GOD'S WILL

"I seek at the beginning," said Mueller, "to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be." Then Mueller was able to claim I John 5:14,15:

"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."



HE PRAYED SPECIFICALLY

One particular Scripture had a profound impact on George Mueller's life. "...open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10). Prompted by the potential of this verse, he recalled, "...I then fell on my knees and opened my mouth wide, asking Him for much. I asked in submission to His will, and without fixing a time when He should answer my petition. I prayed that He would give me a house (orphanage), i.e., either as a loan, or that someone might be led to pay the rent for one, or that one might be given permanently for this object; further, I asked Him for \$5,000; and likewise for suitable individuals to take care of the children. Besides this, I since have been led to ask the Lord to put into the hearts of His people to send me articles of furniture for the house, and some clothes for the children." Mueller then adds a comment that wonderfully gives evidence of his confidence in his prayers. "When I was making the petition, I was fully aware of what I was doing — that I was asking for something which I had no natural prospect of obtaining from the brethren whom I know, but which was not too much for the Lord to grant."

Praying With Power

by Ronald J. Coriell

"History reveals that George Mueller was perhaps one of God's greatest prayer warriors."

HE PRAYED PERSISTENTLY

One of George Mueller's curious habits was to make note of each time he prayed for something. Thus, he could record, "From the end of November, 1850, to this day March 12, 1862, not one single day has been allowed to pass, without this contemplated enlargement [additional orphan houses] being brought before God in prayer, and generally more than once a day."

Upon one occasion when God seemed to delay in answering prayer that Mueller was convinced was in His will, he stated that, "...instead of praying once a day with my dear wife about this matter, as we had been doing day by day for years, we should now meet daily three times, to bring this before God."

HE EXPECTED ANSWERS

Is it not true that today we hear many open-ended prayers? These are petitions that are safely worded so that if God does not answer, the petitioner will not feel badly. Frankly speaking, there is little expectation of specific answers from God. How sad. George Mueller's orphanages would have languished had it not been for his expectant faith to believe that God would

answer prayer.

"You ask," questioned Mueller, "How may I, a true believer, have my faith strengthened?" He then listed some tips which helped to increase his faith and motivated him to expect answers from God.

1. Ask God for faith. James 1:17 states that good gifts come from God. Faith is indeed a good gift—ask Him for it!
2. Read God's Word carefully. It contains hundreds of promises. If you ask God for what He has already promised, you are sure to get an answer (I John 5:14,15).
3. Meditate on God's Word. All too much of our reading is "surface" reading. We need to pause more often to think about what God has said and, most importantly, what He is saying to me. Often, it is at these quiet times that we hear the prompting of the Holy Spirit.
4. Do not tolerate known sin in your life. The Scripture is clear: sin hinders communication with God (Psalm 66:18). Therefore, confess it (I John 1:9) and clear the way for God to answer your prayer.
5. Do not shrink from situations that require faith. God uses trials to build us up (James 1:2-4).
6. Allow God the opportunity to answer in His best time for you. Resist giving God a deadline and, therefore, seeking your own answer.
7. Keep track of your prayers and how God answered (Proverbs 10:14; Hebrews 2:1). Such a record, filled with a history of God's faithfulness to your prayer life, will do wonders for your faith. And it will make a wonderful heritage to leave to your loved ones.

ONE LONG CONNECTED PRAYER

George Mueller's prayer life was, and is, one to be studied by the Christian Church. He has shown us that simple trust in God is never rejected but, rather, it is the simple source of mighty prayer power. The results of his prayers, from early manhood to the glorious old age of 93, afford us a striking example of faith in action — believing God will do what He says. Mueller would assure us that we all can have this same faith if we would with earnest effort make our lives one long connected prayer.

Editor's note:

George Mueller is only one of a host of what Ron and Rebekah Coriell call "Heroes of the Faith." It is their contention that these Christian men and women of character have been too long forgotten. Yet they are truly heroes. It is the Coriells' hope that, as the stories of these great saints are told, the next generation of Christian children might grow up with a new and better set of heroes.

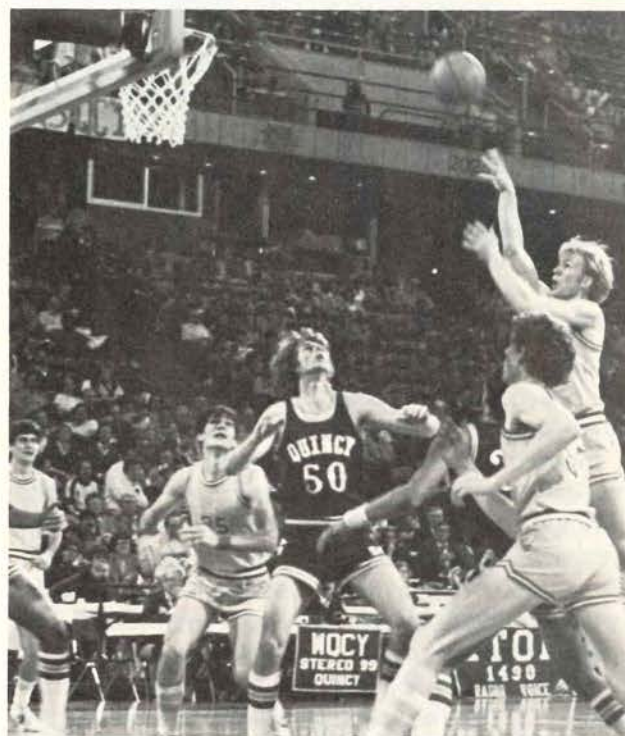
Campus Highlights



YOU DID IT! The Athletic Center Capital Campaign is now complete, and we thank you. Praise the Lord, gifts and pledges for over \$2 million have now been received. Climaxing the campaign was the receiving of the \$200,000 grant from The Kresge Foundation. You will remember the college had to raise \$1.8 million by March 15, 1982, in order to receive the Kresge grant.



THERE IS STILL TIME TO ENROLL FOR FALL QUARTER 1982. You may have heard that Cedarville College has been receiving applications at record levels for Fall Quarter 1982. But David Ormsbee, Director of Admissions, stresses, "There is still time to make application to Cedarville College. The Lord willing, we will even have a new 146-bed dormitory ready in September to accommodate another expected record enrollment."



JACKETS WIN THE DISTRICT AGAIN! It didn't seem likely to repeat as District 22 basketball champions. After all, last year, Cedarville graduated All-American guard Eric Mounts who led the Jackets to a 25-4 season. This season was a struggle all the way with the team earning a 15-10 record. But when the District 22 playoffs arrived, Cedarville began a second season. Results – two wins, no losses, a new district championship trophy to showcase, and another trip to the NAIA tournament in Kansas City.

Coming Events

April

- 1-2 Chadick Theatre Classic
"Forever Yours... Charles Dickens"
- 2-3 Speech/Drama Clinic
- 15-16 High School Choral Clinic
- 17-May 16 Exhibit:
"America's Architectural Heritage"
- 26 The Mainz Chamber Orchestra
with Nina Tichman, pianist

May

- 1 Jr. Swordbearers' Conference
- 7-8 Parents' Weekend
- 8 Cedar Day
Concert Chorale Home Concert
Chi Theta Pi Science Fair

- 13-15 Spring Drama Production
"The Rainmaker" by N. Richard Nash

June

- 5 86th Annual Commencement
- 30-July 3 Alumni Enrichment Conference

July

- 8-10 Salute To Summer

August

- 3-6 Laymen's Conference
with Reese Kauffman

September

- 13-16 Pastors' Conference
with Rev. George Gardiner
- 16-17 10th Annual Cedarville Baptist Open
- 30 Fall Quarter Begins

ITINERARIES:

Dr. Paul Dixon, President

- April 4** Calvary Baptist Church
Grand Rapids, Michigan
- April 9-11 a.m.** Northfield Baptist Church
Northfield, OH
- 18** Calvary Baptist Church
Bellefontaine, OH
- 20** West Moriah Association of
Regular Baptist Churches
Delaware, OH
- 25** Moraine Heights Baptist Church
Dayton, OH
- May 2** St. Louis Cardinals/
Cincinnati Reds Chapel
Cincinnati, OH
- 5-6** Child Evangelism Fellowship
Lansing, MI
- 14-16** Garfield Baptist Church
Milwaukee, WI
- 22-23 a.m.** Haddon Heights Baptist Church
Haddon Heights, NJ
- 27** Colonial Hills Christian School
(Commencement)
East Point, GA
- 28** Landmark Christian School
(Commencement)
Cincinnati, OH
- 29-30 a.m.** Calvary Baptist Church
Wisconsin Rapids, WI
- June 5** Cedarville College Commencement
- 21-25** GARBC Conference
- July 4** Calvary Church
Grand Rapids, Michigan
- August 11** Akron Baptist Temple
Akron, Ohio
- 9-14** Iowa Regular Baptist Camp
Knoxville, Iowa
- 22** Atlanta Braves/New York Mets Chapel
Atlanta, Georgia
- 29-September 1** Berean Baptist Church
Hixson, Tennessee

- September 12 a.m.** Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
Milford, Ohio
- 19** Atlanta Braves/Cincinnati Reds Chapel
Cincinnati, OH

Dr. James T. Jeremiah, Chancellor

- April 4-7** Calvary Baptist Church
LaPaz, Indiana
- 11-14** Calvary Baptist Church
Altoona, PA
- 18-21** University Heights Baptist Church
Evansville, Indiana
- 25-28** The Chapel in Marlboro
Hartville, Ohio
- May 4-14** Northwest Seminary
Tacoma, Washington
- 15-16** Emmanuel Baptist Church
Toledo, Ohio
- June 1-3** Moody Pastors' Conference
- 5** Cedarville College Commencement
- 7-9** Pastors' Conference
Canandaigua, New York
- 9-13** Allen Memorial Baptist Church
Candor, New York
- 21-25** GARBC Conference
Denver, Colorado
- July 1-3** Alumni Conference
Cedarville College
- July 10-14** Baptist Mid-Missions
First Baptist Church, Elyria, Ohio
- 22-28** Gitche Gume Family Conference
Eagle River, Michigan
- 30-September 6** Montrose Bible Conference
Montrose, Pennsylvania

PRAISING WITH

INTENSITY

by W. David Warren

We read in the Scriptures of Abraham who reverently, yet daringly, *reasoned* with God to secure the deliverance of Lot from Sodom's destruction. We read also of Jacob as he *wrestled* all night face to face with God and clinging to Him until God blessed Him.

We read further of Moses. He *pleaded* with God to spare the Israelites and, in a stroke of bold logic, offered himself as the "whipping horse" in their place.

We listen to Elijah as he *prayed earnestly* that it might not rain on the apostasy-riddled Northern Kingdom. We are stunned as we hear Jonah *taking God to task* for His gracious response to the Ninevites' repentance. Even Habakkuk *argued* with God over the propriety of His dealings.

We watch in amazement as our Savior Himself *sweat* blood-like drops of perspiration as He *pleaded* to not drink the bitter cup of suffering that awaited Him. We tune in as Paul *beseeked* God to remove his thorn in the flesh on three different occasions.

Such instances in the Bible call us to examine our own prayer lives. How much wrestling, reasoning, pleading, expressing of strong feelings — in a word, how much *intensity* — is present in our prayers to God?

Usually, our prayers are pale, lifeless dronings. Our praying sounds weak and anemic, ho-hum and hum-drum. It is but an emotionless print-out from computer-like minds. We shy away from expressing our innermost feelings. We fear telling it like it is. We feel it irreverent to vent our logic on the Most High.

Yet, such was not the case with many who prayed in the Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit obviously deemed their vigorous and emotion-packed outbursts worthy of permanent record. Yes, there can be and should be a very real intensity in our prayer life.

TERMS FOR INTENSE PRAYER

Of the eight major New Testament terms for prayer, four of them have intensity built into their meaning.

The term *deomai* has the notion of begging, *entugchano* that of appealing, *iketewo* that of imploring earnestly, and *parakaleo* that of beseeching. The point is that no fewer than one-half of the terms for prayer have an emotional intensity about them. How can we beg, appeal to, implore earnestly, or beseech God with a bland, ho-humness? Indeed, Biblical praying must include intense praying!

INVITATIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS FOR INTENSE PRAYER

Not only do the terms for prayer have an emotional atmosphere about them but, also, so do the invitations to prayer. God invites His children to bare their hearts to Him. A few notable examples will suffice (*italics* mine, for emphasis).

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (Psalm 55:22).

"I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.... This poor man *cried*, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Psalm 34:4,6).

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). Note the buildup of intensity in the three commands.

"Let us therefore *come boldly* unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Though many other such passages could be cited, these are sufficient to show that both the Old and New Testaments encourage the believer to "Tell it like it is" to God. We are to vent to our God our anxieties, fears, desires, and questions as well as our joys, excitements, and anticipations.

THE LOGIC OF IT ALL

When we stop to think about it, it is only logical that there is to be an intensity in our praying. As there is a

spontaneous flow of communication in interpersonal relationships on the human plane, so also should there be between the child of God and his Father. Spontaneity in a relationship results in the free flow of feelings, and the expression of emotions and inner thoughts. When we delete from our prayer life the free expression of our innermost beings, we lose the spontaneity and dynamic of interpersonal relationship with our Father; and we are left with a hollow form, a religious jargon devoid of personal attachment. Our prayers become boring even to us. It is only logical, then, that our Father would encourage us to express ourselves spontaneously and thus with an intensity that should be normal to our interpersonal relationship with Him.

EXAMPLES OF INTENSE PRAYING

The Scriptures are replete with flesh and blood examples of people who expressed their *emotions* to God. Abraham vented his *disappointment* and *perplexity* over being childless (Genesis 15:2-3). Moses related his *fear* and *dismay* over the backlash occasioned by this first approach to Pharaoh (Exodus 5:20-23). Nehemiah pleaded with Jehovah to remember him for good when *no one else seemed to appreciate him* (Nehemiah 5:19). Job vented his utter *frustration* at not being able to figure out why *he was being so harshly treated* (Job 19:7-14), as well as his tenacious trust in God (Job 19:23-25, 23:10). The Psalmist expressed the full gamut of negative and positive emotions — from *fear* to *hope*, *sorrow* to *joy*, *agitation* to *calmness*, *hatred* to *love*. Habakkuk almost shouted his question of “Why?” He expressed his *consternation* at Jehovah’s dealings with men and nations (Habakkuk 1) as well as his quiet *confidence* in God (Habakkuk 3). Jonah exploded in *frustration* over the revival at Nineveh. In fact, it was not until he did so that God dealt with Jonah’s warped perspectives. Our Savior expressed His *thrill* at the wisdom of His Father and His agreement with what He was doing (Matthew 11:25-27). He later revealed His deep sense of *depression* and *dread* in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-44). We also hear Paul as he exclaimed his *exultation* over the wisdom of God’s plan of the ages (Romans 11:33-36).

Yes, there is a kind of intensity that comes into our prayer lives when we freely express to God those pent-up emotions we are feeling. However, intensity also comes when we bring to our Lord a *strong and solid rationale* in our requests.

Take another look at some of these same examples. Abraham *informed* God that the only way He could keep His promises to him was to give him a son. Later Abraham *appealed* to Jehovah to spare Sodom on the basis that it would be unjust to kill the righteous along with the wicked. Moses *reminded* God that He was the One who had brought Israel out of Egypt and that He was bound by covenant promises to His people and that His own reputation was on the line in caring for Israel in the wilderness. Nehemiah *rehearsed* all of his selfless activities on behalf of the returned remnant as evidence

and as a basis for his prayer. The Psalmist *requested* that Jehovah spare his life because dead people cannot praise Him. Further, he *pleaded* for direction in life lest he fail and his enemies scoff at Jehovah. Habakkuk *laid out his arguments and objections* in no uncertain terms, insisting that it was highly questionable that a holy God would use unholy men to accomplish His purposes. Daringly, he *insisted on a reply* (Habakkuk 2:1). Hezekiah took Sennacherib’s threatening letter and *spread it out* before the Lord, imploring Him to defend Jerusalem for His own namesake.

In other words, the folks in the Bible brought to their God intense feelings and forceful logic, and by means of such they moved the Almighty to hear, to respond, to act on their behalf. And we can and must learn to do the same!

AN EXAMPLE

A few years ago a pastor was facing some very threatening opposition. Some church members disagreed with his interpretation of a few Bible passages and were threatening to call him before a council of fellow ministers for examination. He had also been threatened with being “blackballed” from the ministry altogether.

The young man did not know what to do. He could see himself “bombing out” of the ministry in total disgrace. One day, as he dropped his wife off at a shopping mall, he headed for the outer edge of its newly completed parking area. There, he paced back and forth and poured out his fears to his Lord. With a rising sense of desperation he reasoned with the Lord as follows: “Lord, you called me to this church. You know all that has gone on. I do not know what else to do. These threats just terrify me. You must do something to help me.”

He relates that at that point in his praying a verse of Scripture, memorized in years gone by, jumped into his awareness — “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Hebrews 13:5-6). God had answered! It did not matter what mere people might do to him, for God Himself was his portion and stay! A tremendous sense of relief and peace flooded over him and it became the turning point in the crisis he was facing in his church. He had laid it all out before the Lord. He had strongly expressed his feelings and reasonings to God — and the Lord had answered!

A CHALLENGE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, let’s abandon nonchalant praying. Let’s not miss the dynamic and spontaneity of a prayer relationship marked by a free expression of feeling and logic. By all means, let’s share with our Father in Heaven our inner life. Get those thoughts out into the open in order that our God can deal with them and with us. Lord, teach us to pray reverently — with intensity!



***The Times
and the Seasons***
by Pat Landers Dixon

Recently, I surveyed our college students about certain aspects of their prayer lives. Perhaps their replies will not differ too much from yours if you had been given the same questionnaire.

A Student's Prayer Life

1. Who first taught you to pray?

Mother was by far the reply to this question. But, Father, you were not too far behind.

2. Name two sources which have instructed you about prayer and your prayer life, e.g., books, tracts (give titles), persons, courses, etc.

Two books came to the front in this issue: *Power Through Prayer* by E. M. Bounds and John R. Rice's *Prayer, Asking and Receiving*. It was of interest to note that periodicals were least mentioned as a source of instruction. As one might think, certain college courses helped the students in their prayer lives too. I was somewhat surprised that pastors, Sunday School teachers, and youth directors were seldom mentioned.

3. Do you use a prayer list?

A few more than half of the replies checked yes to this question.

4. List two prayer promises on which you rely most often.

Out of eighty-one different verses listed, these four proved the predominant ones in this order:

Matthew 7:7

James 5:16

Philippians 4:6,7

John 5:14-16

I wonder: Have you committed any or all of these scriptures to memory?

5. Approximately how much time do you spend in prayer each day?

Any of us all-American, average Christians would relate to their answer for this question: *5 to 15 minutes*. About five percent of the students stated they "pray without ceasing." Shouldn't we all say that?

6. Does this prayer time occur primarily in the morning? afternoon? evening? other?

Most of the students pray in the *evening*. Realizing this fact, I thought of Robert Murray McCheyne, a

young man who died in his twenties. He states:

I ought to pray

before seeing anyone.

Often when I sleep long,

or meet others early,

it is eleven or twelve o'clock

before I begin secret prayer.

This is a wretched system.

It is unscriptural.

Christ arose before day and

went into a solitary place.

David says, "Early will I seek Thee"

"...Thou shalt hear my voice."

I feel it is far better to begin with God

...to see His face first,

to get my soul near Him

before it is near another.

7. Where do you go to find privacy for prayer?

Dormitory rooms proved to be the prayer closets for these queried students.

8. When was the last time you experienced an answer to a specific prayer request?

About fifty percent had a prayer answered *within a day's time*. The other half had prayers answered between a week and the past month. How many prayers are answered every minute? Our thankfulness for these answers is hardly mentioned to the One who daily loads us with benefits.

9. What are some of your persistent questions about prayer?

Since the students retained anonymity, their prodding questions mirrored their hearts in significant responses:

What are the correct methods in prayer?

What should be the motivation to pray?

Why pray to a sovereign God?

How can I know God hears me?

What does it mean to pray in faith?

10. Give two prayer requests that are on your heart now.

Not many percentage points separated the first three requests:

Other people's problems or salvation

Personal, consistent growth and witnessing

Knowing God's will for life: immediate and long range

Salvation of relatives

Grades

Could some of your questions and answers about prayer have been the same as our Cedarville College students? I saw some similarities. I pray that this issue of the TORCH will instruct you to pray more effectively and encourage you to share this perfecting prayer process with others.

"The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever: forsake not the works of thine own hands."

Psalm 138:8

Your Key To A Successful Summer



2nd

Annual
Alumni
Enrichment
Week
Rev. David Levy
Dr. Gerald Smelser
"Our Jewish Heritage"
A Trip to Israel in Cedarville
June 30-July 3

4th

Annual
Salute
To
Summer
July 8-10

2nd

Annual
Laymen's
Conference
Mr. Reese Kauffman
More Basics
of the Christian Life
August 3-6

15th

Annual
Pastors'
Conference
Pastor George Gardiner
"The Charismatics"
September 13-16

10th

Annual
Cedarville
Baptist Open
September 16,17

Yes, send me more information about:

- ☐ Alumni Conference
☐ Salute to Summer

- ☐ Laymen's Conference
☐ Pastors' Conference

- ☐ Golf Tournament

Name _____

Address _____

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Send to:
Development Office
Cedarville College
P.O. Box 601
Cedarville, OH 45314



THE PRAYER GOD WANTS TO HEAR MOST

"God, I know that I am a sinner, and I believe that you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for all my sins. I now receive Christ as my personal Savior and Lord. Thank you, God, for your forgiveness. Amen."

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" John 1:12.

Have you prayed this prayer?

It's a matter of eternal life or eternal death!

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord" Romans 6:23.

For more information or counsel, please write to:

Cedarville College
P.O. Box 601
Cedarville, Ohio 45314
Attention: Pastor Green